A Prayer to Reverse a Curse July 25, 2021

*1 Kings 8:27-53 Series: Cracks in the Foundation*

For him who confesses, shams are over, and realities have begun. – William James

Intro: How can we be more honest about our failings?

1. Pray for justice, but not too much!
2. God can bring justice when human justice falls short

v. 31 *If a man sins against his neighbor …*

v. 32 *hear in heaven and act and judge your servants*

v. 32 *condemning the guilty … and vindicating the righteous*

1. Asking God for justice frees us to forgive

Romans 12:19 *Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”*

Psalm 140:12 *I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and will execute justice for the needy.*

1. Don’t ask God to give justice to others and mercy to you

Proverbs 21:15 *When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers.*

Matthew 16:27 *he will repay each person according to what he has done*

* How should a Christian’s prayers for justice be different than a non-Christian’s?
* How is it that some of the people who are the most passionate about confronting injustice are unconcerned about their sin?
* Why do some Christians “define sin as the sum total of acts which they themselves do not commit”?

1. Pray about your sin and its consequences
2. 4 of the 7 prayers are about the consequences of sin

v. 33 *When your people Israel are defeated … because they have sinned against you …*

v. 35 *When … there is no rain because they have sinned against you …*

vv. 37-38 *whatever plague, whatever sickness there is … each knowing the affliction of his own heart*

v. 46 *If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive …*

1. Examine your heart and turn from sin

v. 33 *if they turn again to you and acknowledge your name and pray*

v. 35 *if they pray toward this place and acknowledge your name and turn from their sin*

v. 38 *each knowing the affliction of his own heart and stretching out his hands toward this house*

v. 47 *if they turn their heart … and repent and plead with you*

v. 48 *if they repent with all their heart and with all their soul*

* What does it tell you about Solomon’s view of God and humanity that he would make 4 of his 7 prayers about sin, its consequences, and our need for forgiveness?
* In the New Testament, God hasn’t vowed to bring plagues upon us when we sin. What consequences should we expect?
* What do you learn from the various phrases Solomon uses to describe the heart of the repentant? Which one of these is most difficult for you?

1. Pray about what God has called you to do
2. Pray for your mission

v. 44 *If your people go out to battle against their enemy, by whatever way you shall send them …*

v. 45 *hear in heaven their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause*

Ephesians 6:12 *we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness*

1. Pray for neighbours and outsiders

v. 41 *when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name's sake*

v. 43 *hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you*

v. 43 *in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you*

* How can you discern between the battles you bring on yourself and the battles the Lord sends you into?
* Why does Solomon want God to “do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you” (v. 43)?
* What are some of the ways that you as a group should pray about your mission and the neighbours and outsiders God has called you to?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study 1 Kings 8:54-9:9

Notes